

HOUSE RESOLUTION 188

By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Preston Shannon, "The King of Beale Street."

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Preston Shannon of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Shannon was a veteran Memphis R&B singer who had been a fixture on Beale Street for several decades, a supremely talented and beloved performer whose rich vocals delighted Memphians and visitors to the city alike; and

WHEREAS, born in Olive Branch, Mississippi, Preston Shannon moved to Memphis at the age of eight; while his family was steeped in the culture and music of the Pentecostal church, it was the Memphis blues and R&B that fired his imagination; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Shannon first gained notice as a member of the local group Amnesty in the 1980s while he was still working a day job as a hardware salesman; his big break came after he was discovered by soul singer Shirley Brown; and

WHEREAS, his distinctive vocals, which have often been described as a cross between those of Bobby Womack and Otis Redding, along with his supple guitar playing set him on the path to professional success; in the early 1990s, he stepped out on his own, launching a long run as one of the featured acts on Beale Street, the locale with which he would eventually become synonymous; and

WHEREAS, over the next three decades, Preston Shannon cut a familiar figure in the clubs on Beale Street, serving as a sort of musical ambassador to the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visited each year, earning him the moniker "The King of Beale Street"; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his well-known performances, Mr. Shannon has an impressive discography, dating back to 1994, when he signed with Rounder Records; that same year, he

released his critically acclaimed debut, *Break the Ice*, which featured contributions from the famous Memphis Horns; and

WHEREAS, his sophomore effort, 1996's *Midnight in Memphis*, was produced by Hi Records legend Willie Mitchell, who would prove to be one of Mr. Shannon's frequent collaborators; the pair reunited for Mr. Shannon's *All in Time*, released in 1999; and

WHEREAS, Preston Shannon released a number of lauded albums over the years, including the 2014 tribute to Chicago bluesman Elmore James, titled *Dust My Broom*; and

WHEREAS, while continuing to perform on Beale Street during the latter years of his career, Mr. Shannon also took the main stage at the Beale Street Music Festival and appeared on NBC's well-known singing competition television show *The Voice*. His last major performance was in October 2017, when he appeared at the Memphis Music Hall of Fame ceremonies, helping induct blues legend Frank Stokes and folk-pop star Maria Muldaur; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Shannon was a treasured member of the Memphis music family, and his presence on Beale Street will be sorely missed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Preston Shannon, "The King of Beale Street," extending our sincere gratitude for his many contributions to the music scene in Memphis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.